



Building a Better Brookline

**Economic Development
Advisory Board**
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445
617-730-2468

Anne R. Meyers, Co-Chair
Paul Saner, Co-Chair
Dr. Robert I. Sperber, Founder
Cliff Brown
Susan Houston
Kenneth Lewis
Thomas Nally
Marilyn Newman
Alden Raine
Harold Simansky
Donald A. Warner
Derrick Choi

Meeting Minutes: April 7, 2014

Attendees:

EDAB Members Present: Ken Lewis, Al Raine, Paul Saner, Marilyn Newman, Cliff Brown, Don Warner, Harold Simansky, Anne Meyers, Tom Nally

Members Absent: Susan Houston, Derrick Choi, Bob Sperber

Economic Development Division: Kara Brewton, Andy Martineau

1. Public Hearing: Presentation, discussion and possible vote on article 29 submitted by Brookline Local First (BLF):

- Andy Martineau gave a brief overview of the meetings Staff has had with the petitioners to provide them with some guidance in crafting their resolution, including identifying specific areas where the Town could shift procurement spending.
- Andy also noted that their March meeting, the Chamber of Commerce voted to recommend “no action.”
- Adam Mitchell of BLF explained that the intention of the article is to help preserve the character of the Town’s business community and to work with the Town to shift procurement spending where possible to locally owned businesses.

Questions/Comments:

- More specific examples where spending could be shifted would be helpful. Food was a topic of conversation and this all started in part because poll workers were provided with sandwiches from Roche brothers.
- Does Brookline Bank qualify as local?
- The BLF definition is very narrow.
- Are Franchises excluded? Yes
- By definition, the resolution supports some businesses and not others.
- The resolution is non-binding; we are just asking the Town to look into ways to shift spending.
- Resolutions are taken very seriously by Town Meeting because how they vote sends a message. It may be non-binding, but it sends a message to the populous.

Public Hearing:

- Chobee Hoy of BLF – The resolution says Brookline Local First, not Brookline Local only.

Hisu-lan Chang, owner of Fast Frame and Chair of the Washington Square Association: As a franchise owner, article 29 makes me feel like I do not belong. We should not create a hierarchy of businesses. The emphasis should be on shop Brookline and on having a Brookline economy week. Bank of Canton is a BLF member, but they are based out of Canton, MA. Why isn't Brookline Bank eligible? They were born in Brookline. If Brookline Local is first, who is second or third?

- Bob Perry, BLF Coordinator: The BLF definition of local does not recognize nuances. It's not about either/or
- Cliff Brown: There is a tension here and the question is how do we navigate the tension? Elias Audi's gas station doesn't qualify, but his car company does. Star Market supports Brookline sports. There is a presumption in this article that businesses like this are not valued. You should work with the Chamber to craft something more inclusive and celebratory.
- Al Raine: This type of article goes too far into the weeds by asking the Town to differentiate between certain businesses. Encouraging the Town to spend more in Brookline generally is perhaps a more reasonable approach.
- Celinda Shannon, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber supports the entire business community, including non-members.

Vote: By a unanimous vote, the Board approved the memo and recommendations to Brookline Local First, Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee regarding article 29.

2. Review and Approve March minutes:

- Approved as amended.

3. Public Hearing: Discussion and vote on articles 15 – 19 related to Brookline Place:

- Tommy Vitolo provided an overview of article 16 noting that the petitioner, Andy Fischer was not able to make it to the meeting. Tommy explained the intention of article 16 is to provide an alternative to article 15 with respect to the number of parking spaces; the size of the bonus parking; timing of the bonus; improvements to the MOA and policy changes.
- Tommy stated that he does not support, nor does he think Town Meeting will support article 16, but that they chose an artificially low number of parking spaces because they believe the appropriate number is likely somewhere between 350 and 683.

- Tommy stated that he is willing to support an amended version of article 15 and that between now and Town meeting, the project stakeholders should meet to tweak the article and to find a happy medium.
- Cliff Brown: There seems to be a presumption that this group has not been working to negotiate something that works for Children's and the Town. What is the wisdom behind not trusting the work done over the past several months on behalf of the Town and leaving this type of decision to Town Meeting who knows nothing about development?
- Tommy Vitolo: People understand that the Brookline Place Advisory Committee (BPLAC) and EDAB have worked very hard on this project. Nelson Nygaard's final number was 664 not 683. Article 16 was filed a few days before the close of the warrant because we were concerned the parking had not been vetted enough. If there had been a conversation about a distinct warrant article and parking number, it would have been filed. Between now and Town meeting, some people can be educated and persuaded that article 15 is good enough, but why shouldn't we sit down and talk in a smaller group where people can participate to try to get the best proposal possible?
- Cliff Brown: Why didn't those objecting to article 15 volunteer for BPLAC and/or go to the meetings to express their concerns?
- Tommy Vitolo: General concerns about parking have been expressed via article 10, which received 60% of Town Meeting vote. The context is not the same, but it is a conversation about the desired amount of parking in Town. It is unreasonable to expect Town Meeting Members to keep track of all of the issues.
- Cliff Brown: Nelson Nygaard's report was for a minimum parking number and the Committee set a maximum parking number. It is very easy to say something is not appropriate, but what you need to do is prove why. What is the utility of submitting an article with a parking number you think might work, but might not pass Town Meeting?
- Tommy Vitolo: The Consultant's study did not account for parking outside of the garage.
- Kara Brewton: The Nelson Nygaard report does not recommend 664 spaces, nor do they say that Children's should build as many spaces as is financeable. It says they should institute TDM plan to offset parking demand and that the site could operate with 5% reserve. They also say the metered spaces on Pearl Street should be included in potential onsite parking. Their recommendation is for 697 spaces with a 5% reserve.
- Tommy Vitolo: The parking study does not take into consideration actual behavior.

- Paul Saner: There was discussion about metered parking being included, in the overall parking number that was summarily rejected by BPLAC.
- Don Warner: The previous proposal had 1,000 spaces. The developer is now proposing 29% fewer spaces. This should be celebrated, not picked apart. What difference does it make if the Nelson Nygaard is right on the money or if 19 spaces sit vacant. The whole project has been scaled down and it makes sense.
- Tommy Vitolo: Town meeting has moved on from when the original GMR zoning was passed in 2009.
- Paul Saner: There is more work to be done by staff to determine mechanisms for enforcing TDM, among other things and the resulting MOA will be rolled into the Advisory vote and Town Meeting vote.
- Al Raine: This project has evolved and you have to consider how it evolved and what the outcome will be for the Town if it is built.
- Dave Aronson, 30 Stearns Road: I often shop in the Village and having driven down there and looked for parking, I do not think there is enough. If you think we can have less parking and people who come because of this development will be able to park, then you are mistaken. We should be proud of being able to accommodate more people where parking is already difficult. We aren't going to have cars wandering.
- George Cole: Think about the parallel conversation my client is having. Our broker recommended 850- 900 spaces. We hired Howard Stein Hudson who recommended 832 spaces. My client is presenting this number to his people, while Nelson Nygaard is saying 683 spaces will work, which is a big difference between what our consultant is telling us. We thought the conversations about these numbers were finished. We are adding 250 spaces to the site, which is 1.25 net new spaces per 1,000 SF. We are trying to encourage the developer to develop the site with enough parking so that they can actually lease the site. My client is comfortable with 683 spaces with a 20% buffer just in case.
- Marilyn Newman: The parking at Brookline Place should not be a satellite location for the LMA. We have an agreement in principle, but it needs to be in the MOA. Where does that currently stand?
- George Cole: Children's intention is to limit the use of the parking to site users via assigned spaces and monthly passes. There are some policing mechanisms that need to be instituted.
- Ken Lewis: This is a unique opportunity; there is one owner who wants to develop the site. Submitting a fake alternative is reckless.

- Tommy Vitolo: The bulk of the garage and number of spaces is different from the number of trips.

Vote: By a unanimous vote, the Board approved the memo and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, Advisory Committee and Planning Board regarding articles 15 – 19 related to Brookline Place

4. Development Updates:

- **Red Cab:** The Developer is in the process closing on the Town owned parcel and working to satisfy all conditions imposed by the ZBA and Planning Board decisions. They are on track to break ground by the end of May.
- **Durgin/Waldo:** Nothing to report related to the committee's work. We have heard that a yoga studio is taking over two of the vacant storefronts.
- **Circle Cinema:** The project is going through the Boston permitting process. There public comment period ends on April 11. The latest proposed shows a shorter building along Clinton Road resulting in less volume and fewer hotel rooms overall. Brookline is likely to get more hotel rooms and less medical office. The new design responds to previous comments. Brookline has yet to receive a plan submission.

Vote: The Board voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to send Boston a support letter related to the development proposal at Circle Cinema.

5. Misc./New Business:

- Members of the Board are asked to attend the Planning Board hearing on the Brookline Place article on April 10 at 7pm.
- The Route 9 East neighborhood meeting is on May 16 at 7pm in the New Lincoln School Auditorium.
- Harvard Sq. (Hickey Triangle) is being redone. There is a possible meeting with the Parks Department on May 12.
- The May 5 EDAB meeting is cancelled.
- The next regular EDAB meeting is on June 9, 2014 7pm, Room TBD

Meeting adjourned.